AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.121, the following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A cemented carbide material for a surface coated gear cutting tool ~~which~~ wherein the cemented carbide material is employed ~~in~~ as a substrate for ~~a~~ the surface coated gear cutting tool ~~obtained by forming a hard coated layer on a surface of said substrate~~,

said cemented carbide material ~~for a surface coated gear cutting tool~~ comprising a WC-βt-Co based cemented carbide[[,]];

wherein said WC-βt-Co based cemented carbide comprises: WC, a βt solid solution and Co;

wherein said WC and said βt solid solution form a hard phase, and said Co forms a binder phase;

wherein [[a]] the content of said Co ~~forming a binder phase of said cemented carbide material for a surface coated gear cutting tool~~ is in a range of 12 to 17 wt%~~, and~~;

wherein said βt solid solution comprises: WC, TiC, TiN and either one or both of Ta carbonitride and Nb carbonitride;

wherein among components of ~~a~~ said βt solid solution ~~forming a hard phase of said cemented carbide material for a surface coated gear cutting tool~~, [[a]] the content of the components excluding said WC [[is]] are in [[a]] the range of 15 to 20 wt%, and [[a]] the total content of said Ta carbonitride and said Nb carbonitride is in a range of 5 to 7 wt%[[,]];

~~wherein said βt solid solution comprises: TiC, TiN, Ta carbonitride, and Nb carbonitride, and~~

wherein a Nb content D_{Nb} and a Ta content D_{Ta} in said βt solid solution satisfy a relational expression of $D_{Nb}/(D_{Nb}+D_{Ta}) \geq 0.7$[[,]]; and

~~wherein said cemented carbide material is employed as a substrate for a surface coated gear cutting tool obtained by forming a metal carbonitride hard coat layer on a surface of said substrate~~

wherein said cemented carbide material is a nitrogen atmosphere sintered green compact of starting material powders that has been subsequently heat treated at a temperate significantly below its sintering temperature.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended). [[A]] The cemented carbide material for a surface coated gear cutting tool according to claim 1, wherein a fracture toughness at room temperature is in a range of 9.5 to 13 $MPa(m)^{1/2}$.

4. (Currently Amended). A surface coated gear cutting tool comprising ~~a~~ the cemented carbide material for a surface coated gear cutting ~~tools~~ tool according to claim 1.

5-8. (Canceled)